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MARYLAND GOSSIP IN 1755.

(A postscript to Daniel Dulany's letter in the last number of this
MAGAZINE, vol. iii. p. 31.)

I have sent you in this Packet the application for a Militia-Law, the Address of the Quakers, and Colonel Coles's letter.

Will Bordley lately married a virgin of fifty, one Miss Pearce. One Belchior, a clergyman who was chaplain to a man of war, and had not even religion and discretion enough for that station, came to this Province some little time ago, hearing no doubt that it was the asylum for men of his profession and character. He published proposals for writing the history of America, in which he was to prove the extreme politeness and hospitality of the inhabitants. These proposals made him welcome almost everywhere, especially on the Eastern Shore, where he principally lived. I remember the man at the University, a circumstance he availed himself of by adding that we had been intimate, and this though I don't remember that we were even upon the terms of common academical acquaintance.

He borrowed money of every one who would lend it, and practised almost every art of deceit, but with so much closeness and secrecy that his villainy was not fully detected till he had ruined poor Miss B . . . The fellow had the impudence to ask Mr. Goldsborough for his consent to make his addresses to Miss Robins. He pretended to be in no hurry for an answer, that if the young lady was not engaged, and there were no personal objections to him, he would make it appear that he was a man of character, family, and fortune by ample testimonials from England. But Mr. Goldsborough assuring him that his addresses would be fruitless, he at once gave up all pretensions. He is a man of some letters, insinuating in his address, and has the semblance of great good nature and modesty, when he has his points to carry. He came to this town and made himself known to me, and re-

membering his face at college I was civil to him, and introduced him to the Governor and other gentlemen here. He told me that he had a living at Barton, in Norfolk, that having labored under a disorder which his physicians advised him might be cured by two or three voyages, by the interest of a friend he procured an appointment to be chaplain to the Norwich man of war, but that this kind of life being very disagreeable, he had prevailed upon Captain Barrington (who commands the Norwich) to give him leave to travel over the continent, till the Norwich should be ordered from her station to England. It seems the man had a living in England, which is now under sequestration. This story was plausibly told, and he having been most respectfully entertained by Mr. Cam, the Professor of Divinity at Williamsburg, who knew him at Cambridge, I did not question the man's veracity. He made his addresses to Miss B., and married her, and very soon after the ceremony was performed he declared he would return immediately to England, and pretending he had received advice that a ship was ready to sail from Philadelphia, he set off for that place with his wife. There were many claims against him, which he was obliged to pay out of his wife's little fortune, and he had hardly left the Province before his character was fully known. There was hardly ever so great a rascal—he had imposed upon almost as many people as Tom Bell. He was turned out of the Norwich for his excessive wickedness. He has a wife and family in England, and his behavior to his wife in their journey to Philadelphia was such as alarmed her extremely before she knew his character, and since his villainies have been fully detected, I am told, she is persuaded that he had an accursed design upon her life. He has been advertised for horse stealing. When the poor girl got to Philadelphia, she heard of his being married before, and that his wife was alive. This threw her into the greatest imaginable distress. She could not live with him, and did not know how she could leave him, as he had determined in a day or two to leave Philadelphia, and was very watchful of her; and, as she was a stranger to every one in that place, she did not know to

whom to apply for protection. It had luckily happened that Col. Harrison, of Virginia, was then at Philadelphia. He had heard an indistinct account of a young lady from Maryland whose name was Belchior, and the wife of a clergyman, being ill used by her husband. He had heard a good deal of Belchior's fame in Virginia, and suspecting he had married this young lady, he found out her lodgings, and hearing her story from her own mouth, he took her away to his own lodgings, where Belchior demanded her, but Harrison being a man of spirit, and having great compassion for the girl's distress, refused to give her up, or suffer Belchior even to see her. When Mr. Harrison had done his business at Philadelphia he left that place, taking the girl with him in his chaise. At Chester Belchior attempted to break into the room, where she lodged, and intended to seize and carry her away by force, having two men whom he had hired, ready to assist him. In attempting to force the door, the girl being disturbed of her sleep, screamed out for help, and Harrison hearing the outcry, flew to the door of her chamber with a sword and pistol, and threatening Belchior that he would instantly dispatch him, if he did not desist from his attempt, he thought it prudent to retire, and Harrison brought her back to her friends. This behavior of Harrison was very generous and humane. One would be almost tempted to hope that this, with other instances of the same nature, would make our girls more cautious and prudent in marrying strangers, but as women, as well as men, show more violent symptoms of distraction in their impulses towards the other sex than in any other article, I should not wonder much if even this girl should be again ensnared in the same manner.

Jemmy Tilghman was for some time extremely fond of Belchior, who stuck close by him, till he drank out all his claret, a liquor he was particularly fond of, but this being only *vitium clerici* was not much noticed. As he had not an opportunity of debotting my cellar by coming to my house, he fell upon an expedient to do it in another way, which, however, failed him. He wrote to me that he was married, that he intended to return immediately to England, that Mrs.

Belchior was of a delicate constitution, might suffer much by a winter's passage, especially if he could not provide a little wine—that he had not been able to procure any, and that he should ever acknowledge it as a singular obligation if I would spare him a small quantity of the wine he drank at my house—five or six dozen bottles would be sufficient, with a few gallons of spirits. As Mrs. Belchior had not been married long enough to be in a longing condition, I apprehended that a less quantity, and a different sort of wine might do, and, therefore, I informed him that a merchant at this place could supply him with any quantity of good Madeira and spirits he might want, and heard no more from him.

All the French in Nova Scotia, whom they call Neutrals, have been disarmed and seized by Col. Lawrence and Col. Winslow. As they are very numerous (being near fifteen thousand souls), it was thought proper at a council of war, at which were present Boscawen, Mostyn, Lawrence, Winslow, and Monckton, to send to each colony a proportion of these people. Our proportion being nine hundred and three are already arrived at this place, and have almost eat us up. What is to be done with these people, God knows! They insist on being treated as prisoners of war. It was proposed to them to sign indentures for a short term, which they have refused. As there is no provision for them, they have been supported by private subscription. Political considerations may make this a prudent step, for anything I know, and perhaps their behavior may have deservedly brought their sufferings upon them; but 'tis impossible not to compassionate their distress.

The ancestors of some of these people were settled in Nova Scotia before the Treaty of Utrecht. It is, I believe, one of the Articles of that Treaty in the cession of this place to England, that these people should retain their possessions upon the terms of their taking the oath of allegiance. This assurance of their fidelity they have never given. Governor Phipps had agreed to accept of an oath of neutrality from them ('tis said), but this concession being disapproved of, they were called upon to take the oath of allegiance, which they

refused to do, and have, therefore, been dispossessed, etc. It is some time since I have seen the treaty, and I may, therefore, be mistaken. The effects of war are so calamitous that, "Give us peace in our times," is always part of my prayer.

We have been told that an Act of Parliament will soon be made to tax the Colonies for the support of an American war. If the dispute is to be continued, and our Mother Country does expect that we should bear our part of the burthen, which, indeed, seems reasonable, such an Act seems necessary, but so many things are to be considered in making a regulation of this sort just and effectual, that I dread the consequence of the Parliament's undertaking it. The circumstances of many of the Colonies are not sufficiently understood, and how they can be properly represented till we have an intimation that such a representation would be proper, I don't know.

If the Parliament should only ascertain the proportions of aid to be given by the several Colonies, and leave to our respective Legislatures the mode of raising money upon the people, every subject of contention would be revived, and it would become a trial of skill to gain as many points as possible upon each other. I am confident this Province could do but very little, our staple will hardly pay an additional duty, a poll tax, and a land tax would in effect be a tax upon tobacco. A tax upon our labor and our soil is the same with a tax upon the produce of both. We do already pay a very high duty upon tobacco, we take off in return for our tobacco the manufactures of our mother country, and by this duty, and the consumption of British commodities it may be demonstrated that the tobacco Colonies of Virginia and Maryland contribute more to the revenue of the crown, and to the employment of the British manufactories than all the Colonies to the Northward. The poorest sort of people to the Northward make all their clothes.

The 30 p. poll to the clergy is a grievous burthen. A family of ten persons that would be taxed in this Province 300 lbs. tobacco would not pay above the value of 50 lbs. tobacco to the Northward, which in this article alone, supposing

tobacco at 1d. per pound sterling, makes a difference of £1, 0, 10 sterling, and if they were to pay a tax equal to this difference, supposing only three hundred thousand taxables to the Northward, it would be a considerable sum to fall into the common stock.

As I have now quite tired my fingers with writing, I shall end in earnest, and take my leave of you, begging the favor of you to deliver the enclosed as it is directed, to Mr. Anderson, and to request Mr. Anderson to send me in by the first opportunity Strange's Reports, and in the line of Magazines and newspapers, to send me in the Monthly Review as it is published, I mean those which shall hereafter be published. As you will, I presume, communicate to him all the news I have wrote to you (and I have wrote to you all I have heard), I shall postpone writing to Mr. Anderson till another opportunity shall offer.